



REPORT  
OF THE  
TOWN IMPROVEMENT  
COMMITTEE,  
TO THE  
TOWN COUNCIL,

Leicester.

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1845.

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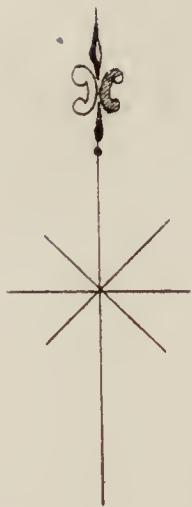




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OF

MARKET PLACE



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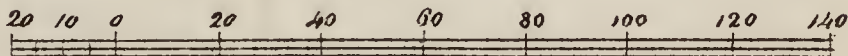
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# REPORT

OF THE

## TOWN IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE.



*“The Town Improvement Committee appointed by the Council for the purpose of taking into consideration what improvements are practicable and desirable, under existing circumstances, have agreed upon the following report:—*

“YOUR Committee consider that an enlargement of the Market-Place is the first step which should be taken in the improvement of the town, its area being nearly as confined and contracted as it was when the town contained less than one third the number of its present inhabitants, and year by year becoming more inadequate for the necessities and requirements of the increasing population.

“Your Committee in carrying out this object, would have recommended the removal of the pile of buildings from the Exchange to the top of the Market-Place, and thus have rendered unnecessary any subsequent application to Parliament on this subject, but that the estimated expense of clearing the site is greater than they anticipated—they therefore recommend that upon the present occasion the buildings behind the Exchange as far as the Bull’s Head Inn should be taken down, and the space cleared for the public convenience, due regard being paid to the vested interests of the tenants and proprietors.

“Your Committee are decidedly of opinion that the holding of cattle fairs and markets in the principal streets and thoroughfares of the town is a great and

increasing inconvenience, and that it is highly desirable for the comfort, safety, and convenience of the inhabitants, that a market should be provided, affording farmers and dealers every possible facility and accommodation for their business, without spreading it over the town as heretofore ; and your Committee having made numerous inquiries upon the subject, and obtained every information in their power, are of opinion that the area of the new market should not be less than ten acres, and that it should be made in the vicinity of the County Gaol, either inclosing the site of the present Recreation Ground, and the land (to the extent required) in its immediate neighbourhood, or appropriating so much of the land nearest to the town at the junction of the Lutterworth and Welford-Road, as may be requisite for the purpose.

“ Your Committee, from a full and careful consideration of the subject, are most decidedly of opinion that improvements as to the public buildings of the town are imperatively called for, and ought not to be deferred. They consider the present Town Hall and Police Office as small and inconvenient, and in no respect fitted for the public business of a town which now contains from fifty to sixty thousand inhabitants, and ranks in size, importance, and population, as the twentieth in the country. They find that as a Court of Law, in its accommodation for Grand and Petty Juries and witnesses, it is so lamentably deficient, that the Judges at the Assizes invariably decline holding their courts there, and that its unfitness for the general business of the town is on all hands acknowledged and admitted. They feel that for any important purpose, such as a public meeting of the inhabitants, it is utterly inadequate ; that its repeated repairs, consequent upon its ruinous state of dilapidation, from time to time, involve a considerable outlay, and they are fully satisfied that the erection of a substantial



edifice for public purposes, suited to the wants and requirements of the town is expedient and necessary.

“Your Committee have received several suggestions as to the situation of the new Town Hall, which (as it is necessary to insert the site in the proposed bill,) they deem it requisite to report to the Council :—the first is, the centre of the upper side of the Market-Place, on the spot occupied by Johnson’s toy-shop, Barlow’s-rooms, and the Saracen’s Head Inn, and supposing the pile of building between this site and the Exchange to be wholly removed ; this would be placing it in the centre of the town, in a most eligible position, where it would present four fronts, and where, on all the four sides, the basement story might be divided into handsome shops, which would be instantly and permanently let so as to yield an annual rental of considerable amount.

“The second situation for it which has been suggested is, that it should occupy the site of the Three Crowns’ Hotel, and that the fourth object of your Committee, a NEW POST OFFICE, should be connected with it in a united building.

“The third suggestion your Committee have received is, that it should be erected upon the site of the house, offices, and garden now occupied by Mr. Burnaby, at the top of the Friar-Lane, which is also nearly central, and sufficiently large for the purpose.

“Your Committee further report that they have given their best consideration to the subject of Post Office accommodation, and they are decidedly of opinion that in this department an immediate necessity exists for great improvement. The present Post Office is small, inconvenient, inadequate for, and unsuited to, the wants and requirements of the inhabitants. Your Committee are aware that these facts have been acknowledged and admitted by the Council, and by the town at large,—that numerous efforts

Sum Borrowed			Annual Interest at 4 per Cent.			Revenue from Improvements.	Revenue from 1d. rate per Quarter.	Total Revenue	Surplus above Annual Interest.			
£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	£.	£.	£.	s.	d.	
40,000	0	0	1600	0	0	500	1800	2300	700	0	0	1st Year
700	0	0										
39,300	0	0	1572	0	0	500	1800	2300	728	0	0	2nd Year
728	0	0										
38,572	0	0	1542	17	7	500	1800	2300	757	2	5	3rd Year
757	2	5										
37,814	17	7	1512	12	0	500	1800	2300	787	8	0	4th Year
787	8	0										
37,027	9	7	1481	1	11	500	1800	2300	818	18	1	5th Year
818	18	1										
36,298	11	6	1447	18	9	500	1800	2300	851	13	3	6th Year
851	13	3										
35,356	18	3	1414	5	7	500	1800	2300	885	14	5	7th Year
885	14	5										
34,471	9	10	1378	16	11	500	1800	2300	921	3	1	8th Year
921	3	1										
33,550	0	9	1342	0	0	500	1800	2300	958	0	0	9th Year
958	0	0										
32,592	0	0	1302	13	7	500	1800	2300	997	6	5	10th Year
997	6	5										
31,594	13	7	1263	15	8	500	1800	2300	1036	4	4	11th Year
1,036	4	4										
30,458	9	3	1218	6	9	500	1800	2300	1081	13	3	12th Year
1,081	13	3										
29,376	16	0	1175	1	5	500	1800	2300	1124	18	7	13th Year
1,124	18	7										
28,251	17	5	1130	1	6	500	1800	2300	1169	18	6	14th Year
1,169	18	6										
27,081	18	11	1083	5	6	500	1800	2300	1216	14	6	15th Year
1,216	14	6										
25,865	4	5	1034	12	2	500	1800	2300	1265	7	10	16th Year
1,265	7	10										
24,599	16	7	984	0	0	500	1800	2300	1316	0	0	17th Year
1,316	0	0										
23,283	16	7	931	7	0	500	1800	2300	1368	13	0	18th Year
1,368	13	0										
21,915	3	7	876	12	1	500	1800	2300	1423	7	11	19th Year
1,423	7	11										
20,491	15	8	819	13	4	500	1800	2300	1480	6	8	20th Year
1,480	6	8										
19,011	9	0	760	9	0	500	1800	2300	1539	11	0	21st Year
1,539	11	0										
17,471	18	0	698	17	6	500	1800	2300	1601	2	6	22nd Year
1,601	2	6										
15,870	15	3	634	16	6	500	1800	2300	1665	3	6	23rd Year
1,665	3	6										
14,205	12	0	568	4	6	500	1800	2300	1731	15	6	24th Year
1,731	15	6										
12,473	16	6	498	19	0	500	1800	2300	1801	1	0	25th Year
1,801	1	0										
10,672	15	6	426	18	2	500	1800	2300	1873	1	10	26th Year
1,873	1	10										
8,799	13	8	352	0	0	500	1800	2300	1948	0	0	27th Year
1,948	0	0										
6,751	13	8	270	1	3	500	1800	2300	2029	18	9	28th Year
2,029	18	9										
4,721	14	11	188	17	3	500	1800	2300	2111	2	9	29th Year
2,111	2	9										
2,610	12	2	104	8	5	500	1800	2300	2195	8	7	30th Year
2,195	8	7										
415	3	7	16	12	1	500	No Rate		483	7	11	31st Year
483	7	11										

£68 4 4 over, and £500. a year Income clear of Rates for ever after.



*town property, requiring no rates for its support, but instead of requiring rates, actually yielding an income of £500 a year to the town exchequer.*

“The annexed table, calculated in accordance with the rule laid down in the new Government Bill in clause 290, differing only as to the source whence the income is derived, will prove the extinction of the debt in the time named.

“Your Committee further propose to ask for powers for providing and laying out Recreation-grounds for the working classes at those ends of the town which are in the neighbourhood of the most densely populated districts, and they deem it advisable that powers should be taken in the Bill to enable the Council to make such additional public improvements as may from time to time be found expedient and necessary.

“Your Committee also recommend that a power of sale of portions of the Town Estate, for the purpose of paying the interest and liquidating part of the principal of the sum to be borrowed for carrying out these improvements, be inserted in the Bill, (if compatible with the standing orders of the House of Commons in regard to private bills,) as many small portions of the Town Estate of the market value of from £1,000 to £2,000 an acre for building land are now only yielding a grazing rental of some five or six pounds per acre, the sale of which, if permitted, would yield eight times the amount at ordinary interest.

“In making any further alterations or improvements of any kind, however desirable, your Committee beg to remind the Council, that it is indispensably necessary that these improvements should be effected through the legitimate and protective powers of an Act of Parliament, and that it is of the first importance that men who occupy responsible positions

should above all things take care that their public acts (however otherwise laudable) should be strictly in accordance with the laws and institutions of their country.

“Your Committee therefore recommend that an Act of Parliament be applied for in the ensuing session to enable the Council to carry out the measures embodied in this report, limiting the amount to be borrowed to £40,000, and the improvement-rate to 1*d.* or 1½*d.* per quarter.

“Your Committee have further to report to the Council, that it was their original intention to have incorporated in the proposed bill the establishment of a Public Cemetery, to be located upon the Town Estate, and to be placed under the control and management of the Town Council; and in the discharge of the duties which the Council devolved upon them, they corresponded with the promoters of several similar establishments in various parts of the country, and personally inspected one, which has been formed upon a different basis, in the town of Nottingham.

“Their inquiries and investigations, in a very early stage of their proceedings, led to the conviction that the adoption of a similar course to that pursued at Nottingham, in the midst of a diversity of views and conflicting interests and opinions which prevailed, would, under present circumstances, be most desirable; and, after much discussion and deliberation, your Committee resolved to leave it out of their Improvement Bill, and thus afford the public an opportunity of taking it up by a private Company, if the feeling in its favour or the general conviction of its necessity should induce the adoption of such a course.

“The Council will have probably observed, from advertisements in the public papers, that the course adopted on this subject has been fully approved of by the public; that the formation of a Cemetery has been



taken up by an influential company and that there is every reasonable prospect of its complete success.

“Your Committee have further to report that the Sewerage and Drainage of the town—a supply of water for the domestic use of the inhabitants, and for the due cleansing of drains, and other measures of a sanatory character, have had their best and most attentive consideration.

“While occupied with these subjects, your Committee have received copies of a public bill for the promotion of the like objects, prepared and brought in, on the part of Government, by Lord Lincoln and Sir James Graham, in which ample provision is made for the health and convenience of the inhabitants of large and populous districts.

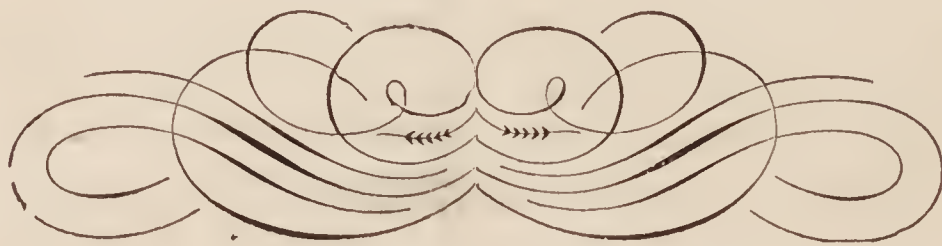
“Your Committee still more recently, during the continuance of their discussions on these subjects, have been furnished with the prospectus of a highly influential and national company, for Water Drainage and Sewerage, amongst the projectors of which they find several members of the Legislature, and others closely connected with the government, and whose objects appear to your Committee to be identical with their own; and still more recently your Committee have seen by the public papers, that an influential *local* company is formed in this town, for the same purpose, being announced in their prospectus, as the ‘Water Supply, Drainage, and Sewerage Company.’

“Under these circumstances your Committee have resolved to report, that they deem it inexpedient to allow these objects to form part of the present bill. They feel satisfied that an application to parliament from the Council, asking for full powers to carry out these measures, during the discussions and deliberations upon the general measure proposed by government, would not be granted. They do not, by any means, as a Committee, concur in the propriety of the



clauses which relate to the constitution of the governing body, in the government bill. They feel that it would be highly injudicious, as well as subversive of the rights and privileges conferred by the municipal bill, to create a second governing body in every locality, of such an anomalous character, and they strongly urge upon the Council the necessity of making every effort to popularize this portion of the measure, instead of embodying provisions in regard to the sanitary condition of the town, in the bill recommended by your Committee.

“Your Committee think it not improbable that the public Water and Sewerage Company, before alluded to, will make overtures, or propose arrangements, which, if deemed eligible, may enable the Council to aid and concur in carrying out the objects proposed. And under all these circumstances your Committee think it best to omit any proposition relating to the subject,—simply calling the attention of the Council to the objects contemplated, and requesting their best consideration of the different projects submitted to the public by the government and the two public companies, for carrying them into effect, with a view to such amendments as may lead to the works being executed in the way best calculated to ensure the benefits proposed.”



## NOTES.

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THE subject of Town Improvements was discussed from time to time in a desultory manner soon after the Municipal change. On the 14th of February, 1839, we find in the Hall Book that the subject was brought regularly forward by the then member for St. Martin's, Mr. Stallard.

*Extract from Hall Book.*

"Feb. 14, 1839. Moved by Mr. Stallard, the Member for St. Martin's, seconded by Mr. Ellis :

"That a Committee be appointed to inquire as to the best mode of obtaining a General Improvement Act for the Town.

"Motion opposed by Mr. Whetstone, the Order of the Day moved by Mr. Paget, and seconded by Mr. Wheatley. Original Motion lost."

This is within eight weeks of *Seven years ago*, and it was afterwards for a year or two a matter of consideration and discussion. A Committee was subsequently appointed, and the outline of a Bill proposed, but no further advance was permitted; the Bill was shelved, and the subject indefinitely postponed.

So much it is necessary to state to show that the subject of an Improvement Act is not new, but that it has already been frequently, maturely, and deliberately considered.

It is well known there are no powers in the Municipal Act to authorise the Council to make any improvements, or even to appropriate *any* portion of the Town fund for rents or guarantees to private companies who would make such improvements. The Council was obliged to decline the offer of a new Post Office made a year or two ago, because it had no power to vote a few pounds per annum towards the rent of it; and yet the Council has been annually discussing the subject of Post-Office accommodation, and been complaining of the want of it, ever since March 13, 1839.

A Town Improvement Act is therefore necessary to enable the Council to proceed legally. A public body is not justified in evading the law, or in acting in defiance of it, under any circumstances. This being admitted, there can be no difference of opinion about the propriety of getting an Improvement Act. The only real ground for difference of opinion is, with respect to what is to be put into it.

In going for any Act of Parliament, a certain serious expense is inevitable. That expense is not increased in proportion if it contain several objects. A single object may cost £500; but if there are three or four objects it may not cost more than £1000. It is sound policy and true economy, therefore, to embrace all that may be necessary for a few years to come; to save the trouble and expense of going to Parliament again for supplementary or additional powers *a few years hence*.

For these reasons it is policy to make a Town Improvement Bill as comprehensive as possible; taking care at the same time that its chances of success are not jeopardized by asking too much.



The object contemplated by the present Bill, is to secure necessary powers for the legal prosecution of works of public utility, and to obtain the *longest* term which Parliament will allow for the purchase of property which may be required.

For the purposes of this Act it is estimated £40,000 may be requisite. The calculation between pages 6 and 7 shows that this may be paid off, principal and interest, in thirty years, by a rate of One Penny per quarter, and the property be left free to the Town, bringing in a large annual income to its exchequer for ever after.

The clause in page 7, suggesting a power of sale of certain comparatively unprofitable portions of the Town Estate, it will probably be expedient to re-construct, so as to make such sales, to a limited extent, in "aid of the Improvement Fund," instead of in liquidation of it; as it will probably be deemed more economical to insert the *intermediate* property, in the plan tinted yellow, in the present Bill, rather than (as the Report contemplated) make it the subject of a subsequent application to Parliament.

The money for the purposes of this Act will not be borrowed all at once, as is reported, but only as it is wanted. The laying out of it, will be under the control of the Council, and will probably occupy several years; at all events it is quite certain that it will not be laid out precipitately. The property which, it may be necessary to buy for the improvements, must be purchased by the end of the seven years: but any further outlay beyond this, in the way of erecting public buildings, is not obliged to be made for ten or twenty years, or even at all, if the Council of that day should determine otherwise.

The probability is that the improvements which will realize an income and be least expensive, will be the first commenced.

The proposed Cattle Market, according to what is considered the best plan, will cost as follows:

	£.	s.	d.
Area, Ten Acres....5 Acres Grass .....	—	—	—
5 Acres paved and drained at £564. 7s. 0d. } per Acre, by estimate .....	2821	15	0
880 Yards of Fence-Walls at 12s. ....	528	0	0
Toll-house Gates, &c.....	250	5	0
For Extras, add, to cover all contingencies	400	0	0
	£4000	0	0

Soon as this is finished, it will be immediately a source of revenue, and will probably ere long be a profitable investment.

The expense of the enlargement of the Market-Place, so far as it is proposed in the second paragraph of the Report, is estimated as follows:—

Portion of Market-place at the back of the Exchange (the part tinted blue in the Plan); estimated value of the fee-simple of the premises .....	£.	s.	d.
	6625	0	0

*In addition,*

Compensation for Market-tolls }  
on causeway, and compen- }  
sation if property is taken by }  
forced sales .....

*Set-off against these claims,*

Old Materials of this proper- }  
ty, and of the Exchange, } £1000  
say about .....

Soon as this site is cleared, it will become immediately a source

of income, and the increased Stallages and Tolls will again produce an increased revenue.

The other property, that marked red upon the Plan, the proposed site of the Town Hall, is estimated at £9090.

The intermediate property, marked yellow upon the Plan, is estimated at £10,300.

As two or three of these properties are upon leases, the Council will probably defer the purchase of this pile, to the latter part of the period allowed by the Act, and conduct the negotiation for the various properties so as to allow the terms of tenancy to expire previous to purchase.

The tenants of the present shops may be so arranged with as to have secured to them a preference of the shops on the four sides of the Town Hall; and the licenses of the five Inns, the tenants would probably be allowed to transfer to other private properties in St. Martin's which they might deem eligible for their business.

The compensation required if this gradual process of arrangement is carried out, would be comparatively small, and the set-off of the old materials in these properties in aid of it is estimated at about £2000.

The widening of the top of the High Street, the laying out of Recreation grounds, and the eight or ten other minor objects of the Bill, will be inexpensive matters of no moment.

The Post Office may be constructed by a private Company, by the Act having a clause inserted to enable the Council to contribute some £20 or £25 a year towards its annual rental.

The Water Supply, Drainage, and Sewerage, may be going on at the same time as these other improvements; the Company requiring nothing from the Council upon £110,000, and only a per-centage by way of guarantee upon the Sewerage outlay, which if at  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. (and the Company will probably not stipulate for more or the Council agree to more) will be, upon the estimated outlay of £40,000, £1800 a year or 1d. rate per quarter.

In the interim while these improvements are in progress, other supplies will flow in from sales of the Town Estate.

Of the land for the sale of which permission was given on the 5th of March, 1836, and on the 19th of August, 1836, it was estimated, that an amount equal to £40,500, remained unsold on the 16th of October, 1839, and three fourths of this remains unsold to the present day.

Land will be sold in the immediate vicinity of the New Cattle Market, for Inns, and Houses of accommodation.

Land will be required, by the visitors of the County Lunatic Asylum, in the vicinity of that establishment.

Land will be wanted for a reservoir by the Water Supply Company.

The Midland Counties and other Railways will come by Act of Parliament through the Town Estate, and make forced purchases.

The lease of the Race Course will expire in about four years hence, when the London-Road frontage, to the depth of 200 yards, may be sold for building purposes, and will yield many thousands of pounds; and the Race Course can have additional land to the same extent added, as an equivalent, on its other boundaries, all being Town property.



From all these sources of supply, a portion will come in aid of the Improvement Rate, and assist in diminishing the interest, and ultimately extinguishing the principal. Even if there were no supplies from any other quarter than rates, a rate of One Penny per quarter, as before stated, will extinguish the whole sum—principal and interest—in 30 years, and leave the town with an improved revenue of many hundreds a year from its improved property.

THESE ARE THE FACTS, however much the subject may have been misapprehended, misstated, or mystified, in the discussion. When the movement, and its objects, and its expenses, are fully and impartially examined—when the guarantees for the judicious and gradual carrying out of the Act are understood—when it is considered that the Act will be in the hands of the Council, and one fourth of that Council annually in the hands of the Town—instead of a want of confidence and a mistrust that obstructs progress, let the hope be entertained that all parties will withhold further opposition, and that it will receive their cordial, effective, and general support.

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If the expense contemplated by the Water Supply, Drainage, and Sewerage Company, viz. £150,000. had to be incurred by the Council under a private Act, or if it had to be incurred by the Board of Commissioners under the Government Act, in either case they would have to borrow *all* the money, and principal and interest must be paid off in 30 years; and consequently at 4 per cent. it would take to do this a rate of eleven thousand pounds per annum.









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# SOUTH COUNTY ELECTION

## OF 1841.

### MR. J. BIGGS'S REPLY TO THE "CHRONICLE."

*To the Editor of the Leicestershire Mercury.*

Dear Sir,—In your Second Edition of last Saturday you were kind enough to insert a hasty note from me, in reference to an attack made upon me in the *Leicester Chronicle* of that day, on account of the part I took in the County Election of 1841. I said I should have to trouble you for "a few columns" of your paper of this week, in order to correct the mis-statements of your contemporary; and I now beg you to give insertion to the accompanying letter which I have forwarded to the *Chronicle*.—Apologising for having to intrude thus largely on your space, and hoping a similar necessity may never again occur, I remain, dear sir,

Yours respectfully,  
JOHN BIGGS.

Stoneygate, March 11, 1847.

[ADVERTISEMENT.]

*To the Editor of the Leicester Chronicle.*

Sir,—In this free country every man who enters upon public life, must very early in his career make up his mind to have his motives misconceived, his actions misconstrued, and his objects misinterpreted. If he cannot do this, relying upon his own consciousness of rectitude, and trusting himself to the good sense, calm reflection, and sound judgment of an intelligent community, he had better never emerge from private life in the hope to benefit his country.

I have been, Sir, at sundry times the subject of your remarks, and have had alternately your praise and your censure; the last has latterly been meted out to me without measure; but if you conceive you are doing your duty to society, I can only lament what I believe to be your error.

I am very grateful for your having, by your remarks of last week, given me an opportunity of explanation respecting the election of 1841.

I shall not touch upon your personal comments upon myself—my motives, my actions, my ambitions; you evidently know little of my character, or you would not conceive me (after 20 years of exertion in the public cause) capable of being influenced by such considerations as you impute to me. You will some day, I doubt not, discover that you have misunderstood me and accused me unjustly: till that time comes, let this pass.

I should not have even noticed those remarks at all but that, in your paper of last week, imputations are not spared even upon my honour and integrity as a public officer in 1841. This is a grave subject—far beyond the most reckless license of political animadversion, and it is but just that the paper which has made the charge should be the medium of proving that charge untrue. I have suffered for nearly six years a grievous wrong. Advantage has been taken of the anomalous position in which I was placed, by holding three offices at the same time, to inflict this wrong upon me. These offices, when held by an honourable man, are perfectly compatible with each other: yet it would seem, from your animadversions of last week, that even an honourable man, by acting in this threefold capacity, is liable to be placed in an equivocal position.

Before I proceed to an explanation of the events of 1841, it will be as well to recall to your recollection that I, like all my brother electors, entered with energy and ardour upon the County Election of 1830; that I took the office of Honorary Secretary to the County Reform Committee upon that defeat, and assisted to place the County in the hands of the Liberal party, by the return of Messrs. Paget and Phillips; and subsequently, when the County was divided by the Reform Bill and those gentlemen retired, I acted as Honorary Secretary or Chairman at the unopposed return of



Mr. Dawson. From the time of Mr. Dawson's retirement in 1835 (when the register and the prospects were discouraging) I for some years filled the office of Chairman of the South County Registration Association then formed, in the expectation that, by the registry being attended to, we might eventually return Liberals again; and thus, having always been identified with the County elections, I felt naturally a deep interest in recovering our position at the first period which appeared to promise a fair chance of success. In May, 1841, I and others of my electoral friends thought the time had arrived when we might achieve South County independence. I consulted with many:—most of them conceived it a duty to make every effort—and all were anxious it should be contested, if but a fair possibility of success existed. That the result did not answer our hopes, proves nothing against the movement. Ours was no isolated case: nine-tenths of the County Members in 1841 were returned by the Tories. No polling had taken place for ten years; and a third of the reputed Whigs on the register went over to the Tories. It was the case everywhere: some of our old county friends connected with South Derbyshire calculated upon a fair contest here, if not success. They succeeded no better here than we did here; and they and we had to console ourselves, as one of our subscribers expressed it, "by the reflection that we deserved success though we had not achieved it."

All the Election Statistics had been for some time undergoing careful examination with a view to an effort; the last list, I find from the subjoined note, was finished on the 29th of May:—

Sir,—I have gone through the lists you desired, and find them as follows:—For, 516; against, 443; doubtful, 18. I have given them the very outside, being old friends.

Leicester, 29th May, 1841.

South County Votes.

L. STAINES.

On the 3rd of June the address was issued which opened the South County election. It was extensively circulated. It appeared in your paper of the 5th of June, 1841, and in your columns of that day you expressed your approbation of the step taken as follows:—

A soul-stirring address, signed by John Biggs, Esq., chairman of the registration association of the Southern Division, to the freeholders, will be found among our advertising columns, and will be read with much interest.

The Electors generally were favourable to the effort. Congratulatory communications came from all quarters, and the result was a requisition empowering the association to invite and bring forward two candidates. A copy of which will be found in the notes subjoined. This requisition was advertised in your paper of the

12th of June, and in your paper of the same date is an advertisement calling a meeting of the electors at the Bell Hotel, to decide upon the subject. These advertisements also will be found in the notes. It had been a general understanding that, in the first instance, the requisition was to be presented to Messrs. Dawson and Pares, as the candidates most likely to succeed, and to succeed at the least expense. A numerous and influential meeting took place on Tuesday the 15th, at the appointed time, when it was unanimously resolved that the requisition should be presented to those gentlemen, and that the meeting should then be adjourned to the next Monday (i.e. the 21st June) at three o'clock, for their decision.

On June 19 your paper contained, in a leading article, the following observations:—

Seeing, then, how much the electors of South Leicestershire are misrepresented, we cannot but congratulate them on the cheering prospect there at the present time of their deliverance from the nightmare which their deep slumber for the last few years has brought upon them. A numerous and highly respectable meeting of the South Leicestershire Registration Association (whose truly energetic, determined, and refreshing address to the electors appeared in our columns a week or two ago) took place at the Bell Hotel on Tuesday last, when it was determined that the requisition to the freeholders should be presented to Thomas Pares and Edward Dawson, Esqrs., and the meeting adjourned to Monday, the 21st inst., at three o'clock, to receive their answers. The most animating and inspiring offers of service and expressions of co-operation and sympathy with the objects of the meeting were received from various influential parties. We understand both gentlemen met the committee on Thursday last, but of course no decisive answer will be returned until Monday next.

So stood matters about the 21st of June, when I was called upon by the confidential adviser of the candidates for the Borough, who had come down expressly to make his arrangements for the Borough Election. He *voluntarily* offered a handsome subscription on the part of his clients to the County Fund—to subscribe a guarantee for which I had become responsible a short time before, to an Emancipation Fund; and, in addition, to use every exertion to get a grant from the Reform Club for the same purpose. As the *acting manager* of the *County Association*, I felt it my duty to be ready to accept these offers when *voluntarily* made, though I should not have solicited them. There could be no mistake as to the object in view on the part of these subscribers, which was clearly to encourage and foster the County Election, so as to enable them to get through the Borough with safety. It was from a patriotic feeling such as had originated the movement—it was from no interest in the



thern Division—it was evidently a mere business calculation that such subscription was judicious and expedient;—and so it was. It is undoubtedly a master stroke of policy. On the requisition being declined by the gentlemen to whom it was first offered, which was thus noticed in your paper of the 26th of June,—

**SOUTH LEICESTERSHIRE.**—A large meeting of the South County Electors was held at the Bell Hotel, Monday last, when letters were read from Messrs. Pares and Dawson, declining to accept the Requisition. A committee consisting of 10 gentlemen, was appointed to carry out the views of the requisition; and this committee met on Wednesday last, nothing has yet transpired relative to their proceedings.

Various candidates were discussed daily, and an extended correspondence entered into. It was understood that Col. Cheney would come forward as one candidate; and in a few days it began to be rumoured that Mr. Gisborne would be beaten at Newport, which election was to take place nearly a fortnight before our South County one; that he would probably be also; and, if so, that he would have the preponderant weight of the Liberal County influence. The probability of a local subscription in the County, in addition to the subscription already promised, rendered our prospects encouraging. I went on diligently making every preparation. The County Contest became an interesting matter to almost every body throughout the division. I was told by one highly honourable man that the County Contest was *invaluable* to the Borough Members, and that they ought to subscribe liberally. It was suggested to me by another whose honour is undoubted, who was anxious for the contest, that I should ask the Borough Members for £500 as a subscription to the fund; and also that I should apply to the Reform Club. I was glad to hear this suggestion from the quarter it came from, as it evidenced an opinion that *applying to the Borough Members* for a subscription was thought by a man of unimpaired integrity a perfectly honourable proceeding. But it was then unnecessary for me to apply, as I had, previously to this suggestion, accepted the *voluntary* promise of a subscription from the agent of those parties. Under circumstances occurred, trivial in themselves, but all tending to lull me into absolute security as to those subscriptions, or I should even at that hour, have ventured to pro-

Mr. John Easthope called, I believe, on the 1st of June, five days before the Borough Election, in company with his confidential adviser, at my counting-house. It was a mere

call of courtesy on his coming to canvass; but his manner and conversation indicated that he was highly pleased with the South County effort; and he appeared to be warmly interested in its progress and success. I did not converse with him about his subscription or his colleague's, for I had the most entire confidence in his confidential adviser, and I had not the slightest doubt but that the subscription was secure. I never dreamed of doubting it.

The idea of Mr. Gisborne coming out with Col. Cheney was now gaining ground, and so matters progressed until the day of the Borough Election. This was on Tuesday and Wednesday, the 29th and 30th of June. At the conclusion of the two days' proceedings, the Borough Members dined at the Bell, and several county gentlemen dined with them. What passed I was not cognizant of, as I was at home, and never mixed myself up with the Borough proceedings at all. But about nine o'clock that evening some of these county gentlemen came up to my house at Stoneysgate. A new impulse had evidently been given to the county effort, and I found that their minds were fully made up to proceed with energy. I was sanguine also, because I saw that all the influence and countenance of the County Liberals which we should have had if Dawson and Pares had stood, would be given to Gisborne and Cheney; and I also saw clearly, as I thought, that in addition to the subscriptions in hand, an adequate sum would be contributed so as to work the Election well and efficiently.

The next Saturday came, three or four days after the Borough Election—*Saturday the 3rd of July*. Mr. Ashurst and Sir John Easthope, who had gone round by Tewkesbury, arrived in London—went to the Reform Club—and by that night's post (*three days after the Borough Election was over—three days after all the circumstances of that Election had been witnessed and known by the Members themselves and by all parties concerned*) I received the following letters,—one announcing the grant of £500 obtained from the Reform Club, and recognising the subscriptions offered *ten days before* the Borough Election; the other a security from the Reform Club itself:—

(Copy.)

Reform Club House,

4 o'clock afternoon,

3rd July, 1841.

Dear Sir,—If you determine to go to the Poll, write and thank them for the £500. The £500 will be made conditional on your going to the poll.

I RECOGNIZE THE UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN YOU AND ME: that all above the LEGAL expenses for the Borough, up to £1,000, and a subscription



to the Emancipation Fund, is TO BE SUBSCRIBED  
TO YOUR SOUTH COUNTY EFFORT.

Faithfully yours,  
W. H. ASHURST.

To John Biggs, Esq.

(Copy.)  
Westminster Reform Club,  
3rd July, 1841.

My Dear Sir,—If you go to the Poll in South  
Leicestershire, I am authorised to promise you £500  
from this fund.

Yours truly,  
JOSH. PARKES.

To John Biggs, Esq., Leicester.

What was the object of this “acknowledgment” but to show that, in it, and in the other  
promise by the same post, I had the £1200 to  
commence with, in accordance with the expectations  
held out previously? If the contest had  
been arrested at all, it should have been on the  
21st of June, when the first candidates declined,  
and when these promises were made, doubtless  
in order that it might be kept on over the 30th.  
If the prospect of ample funds and prospective  
candidates had not opened thus, the effort probably  
would have been given up at that time. By that  
same mail came down Mr. Gisborne; and on the  
next day, Monday the 5th of July, he and Col.  
Cheney published their addresses and took the  
field. Some of the County Gentlemen sent in  
subscriptions; I wrote immediately for subscriptions  
to others; and the result was, that the subscription  
list before the canvass was completed stood thus:—

LIST OF SUBSCRIPTIONS PROMISED.

Subscription by W. H. Ashurst, Esq., on behalf of Easthope and Ellis, ten days before the Borough Election.....	£700
Subscription by Josh. Parkes, Esq., on behalf of the Reform Club.....	500
2 Candidates and 8 County Gentlemen, £100 each.....	1,000
3 do. do. do. 50	150
2 do. do. do. 30	60
	£2,410

I tried to get a further grant from the Reform Club (as I had anticipated £1000 would have been obtained at first) by writing to one or two highly influential parties. They promised to do all they could. This was part of one letter in reply:—

My Dear Sir,—I have just received your letter, I will write immediately to ———, who has I believe as much influence as any one in the Reform Club. I have seen ———, who thinks with me.

I did not succeed, and I then took the responsibility of the expense of the contest upon the faith of the above list. The election came on. The disastrous result (although every voter was brought in, from whatever distance and at what-

ever cost) I need not remind you of—all remember it with regret: we were defeated. I cannot describe the mortification I felt at this defeat. I was worn out from exertion and want of rest; I thought not of the risk, or the probable excess of expenditure, or the pecuniary loss; but the fact of the long hoped for effort having resulted in entailing mortification upon all my political friends, as well as upon myself, pained me and annoyed me. I had no idea *then* of any personal pecuniary inconvenience or annoyance from other sources; but these soon came, and have been borne ever since (five years and a half) in silence; and nothing but the impossibility, with any feeling of self respect, of my again supporting the old candidates—nothing but your attack of last week, on the authority of Mr. Wynn Ellis—and my confidence, from my fellow-townsmen’s knowledge of me, that they would never believe that I had acted in any of the offices they have given me in a manner unbecoming a man of integrity and honour, would have induced me to explain.

Soon after the contest was over, I called in the liabilities. They amounted to £2,829 11s. 5d. I deposited the subscription list, amounting to £2410, and wrote a circular requesting the subscriptions to be paid in. The two of £30, the three of £50, and nine out of the ten £100 were paid in immediately; but the £700, the £500, and one of the £100—making £1300 altogether—have *never been paid in to this day*, although it is now five years and nine months since, and *within three months of the statute of limitation*. The £419 11s. 5d., which was the excess of expenditure over the subscription list, I paid at once out of my own pocket. The £1300 has stood, by the advice of the Committee’s Solicitor, as an open account ever since; but £65 annual interest I have paid upon it, out of my own pocket also, every 1st of January since, making in all £325; and if the Solicitor to the Committee does not succeed in his proceedings against the Reform Club for their £500, I lose this £1300 more—making, in all, £2044 11s. 5d. I have nothing to complain of with respect to any of the parties, in this town or county, connected with me in this movement. It is possible the election might have been worked better; but all did the best they could under the circumstances. I feel deeply, have ever felt deeply, that a contest which was commenced from the patriotic hope of emancipating one of the two Divisions, and which called forth the best energies of so many honourable and public spirited men of this county, was (in reliance upon a voluntary offer of a subscription) made use of during ten days by the parties then returned for the Borough to secure their seats for that



borough; and that when their ends were answered—that three days after those seats were secured—I should receive a written security (in their confidential agent's handwriting) for their own subscriptions, and another for the grant from the Reform Club, both coming by the same mail which brought Mr. Gisborne,—and that thus I should be led to look upon both as *valid securities*, and be involved in a heavy responsibility which would not have been undertaken, and precipitated into a conflict which would not have been fought, but for the certainty of these supplies.

This is, in brief, the beginning and the end of the history of the South County Election of 1841—a history corroborated by notes taken from your own paper of that year; a contest which, at that day, you very properly characterized as a “noble, arduous, and patriotic effort,”—a contest which was looked forward to by myself and friends for years, as one that would restore the Liberal party to its former position; but which ended in proving the fickleness of opinion—the serfdom entailed by the existing tenant franchise—and the consequent uncertainty of the most careful calculations.

I come now to the period when, after the close of the contest, I found the liabilities amounted to £2829 11s. 5d., and the subscription list to £2410. The excess of expenditure, £419 11s. 5d. I immediately paid, and wrote in the beginning of August to all the subscribers to remit their respective amounts. Many of the subscriptions were paid in, but that on behalf of the Members was delayed. On the 19th of August I received a letter respecting it, as subjoined:—

John Biggs, Esq., Leicester.

London, 19th August, 1841.

Dear Sir,—I acknowledge your letter of yesterday. I have written to Mr. Toller and Mr. Hutchinson. I am quite grieved at the delay.

Yours truly,

W. H. ASHURST.

[Mr. Hutchinson was Chairman and Mr. Toller Solicitor to the Legal Committee.]

On the 29th of October, another as follows:—

London, 29th Oct., 1841.

Dear Sir,—As yet I am not informed what the legal expenses are. Mr. Toller has sent me particulars, but the main item—that about the booths—is, as I understand, not yet ascertained; at all events it has not been sent to me.

I feel too deeply for those who have disbursed large sums of money, to be sudden with them when they become warm and even unjust in their language towards those who have only the misfortune of being the medium of communication.

Pray let me know the amount of the legal expenses for the booths.

There will not be £700 after the legal expense are discharged. Pray let me know what they are

I am, Dear Sir,

Yours truly,

W. H. ASHURST.

John Biggs, Esq., Leicester.

Again, in five or six weeks, Mr. Ashurst thus writes:—

London, 6th Dec., 1841.

You say you are sure the Members would not hesitate one moment or force you to pay interest on their account, if I urged it as you must call upon me to do.

I assure you you are doing me much injustice in this conclusion.

I am glad you are as you say, likely to meet your Members at Derby. Take my letter with you, which is dated from the Reform Club. It was written in the Reform Club House, to which Sir J. E. accompanied me.

Dear Sir,

Very faithfully yours,

W. H. ASHURST.

On the 6th of December, I wrote, it appears, to Sir John Easthope, from whom I received the following reply:—

London, Dec. 7, 1841.

Dear Sir,—I never felt more surprised at the receipt of any letter in my life than that which I experienced in consequence of yours received this morning. Permit me to ask who can have committed me to the promise of any contribution to your County Election without my authority? and the amount for which that party has thus unauthorizedly subscribed my name?—I am sure it will occur to you that that part of the excessive expenditure incurred in the Town of Leicester which I am willing to pay, added to other expenditure of the same class, will be a very ample contribution on my part to the public cause at the last general election.

I am, Dear Sir,

Yours very faithfully,

JOHN EASTHOPE.

To John Biggs, Esq., Leicester.

I went to the Derby Anti-Corn Law Meeting on the 9th of Dec. 1841. Sir John was there, but I had no opportunity of obtaining an interview. Messrs. How and Billson were there also, for the purpose of pressing their claims for the Borough Election. They forced an interview upon Sir John, as I understood, after waiting a long time.

I presume I wrote to Sir John Easthope again, either that night from Derby, or the same night from Leicester; for I find his next letter is dated Dec. 11, 1841, as follows:—

Dear Sir,—I have seen Mr. Ashurst to day on the subject of your letter of yesterday's date, and I regret to say that it is out of my power to reply in any other terms to your communication than repeating my former assurance that nobody was authorized—nor did I know or believe that anybody had subscribed on my behalf to your County Contest until I received your letter of the 6th inst.



I can therefore only refer you to Mr. Ashurst, who will amply confirm that which I now state to you.

Your brother William's statement at the Derby meeting was truly admirable, and is calculated to do great good, whilst it cannot fail of procuring for me a very high degree of credit.

I cannot express to you how much I regret to feel obliged to object to pecuniary claims from friends whom I so much regard as many of my friends in Leicester; but the determination that I communicated to Messrs. How and Billson at Derby—which had been previously communicated to Mr. Ashurst for that purpose—is the result of careful consideration, which, on every account, I feel it would be improper for me to change.

I am obliged to do the same in respect to your County expense.

If the election expenditure at Leicester had been confined to the legal expenses, or to a moderate sum beyond the legal expenses, although I authorised a subscription yet I should have felt pleasure in turning to your assistance in a case where your public spirit has laid you under a severe burden.

I remain, Dear Sir,

Yours truly,

JOHN EASTHOPE.

To John Biggs, Esq., Leicester.

To this I immediately replied as follows:—

John Easthope.

Dear Sir,

I have your letter of the 11th December.

Reference to Mr. Ashurst is useless. I have his acknowledgment of the agreement.

The only question is, whether he was your agent or not.

If he came to me in the character of your agent, and was not so, he came under false pretences and knowingly deceived me.

I cannot believe (however devoted he may feel to the interests of a powerful client) that he would thus with any man.

At the time he made the agreement, he asked me to name the person I thought best fitted to be the Chairman of your *Legal* Committee. I named Mr. Hutchinson, and he was appointed: this proves that he [Mr. Ashurst] was your authorized agent.

*I never doubted it.*

My claim rests upon its own merits.

The contract was made prior to any other.

It cannot be affected by any subsequent acts or expenses of the parties you name.

*I knew* nothing of the Borough proceedings.

As returning officer, I could not mix myself up in them.

The acts of the Borough Managers have nothing to do with my claim.

*If you and Mr. Ellis will submit the matter to any person of integrity and high character—say to Mr. J. H. Humberstone—I will at once abide by his decision.*

With respect to the heavy expenditure you allude to, we are tired of the system as much as you can be, and if, next time, the election cannot be won

by the *Legal* Committee, we are quite content to go unrepresented.

I am, Dear Sir,

Yours respectfully,

JOHN BIGGS.

To the above I received the following declining any further correspondence:—

London, Dec. 14, 1846

Dear Sir,—Mr. Ashurst was my confidential agent for the election of the Borough, but he does not profess that he had any authority to give away my money, or to expend it in respect to the County or any other election.

I cannot sufficiently express my surprise that you should suppose, because Mr. Ashurst was my agent for the Borough, that he was thereby empowered without authority, to give away my money to defray the expenses of your County election.

It appears very strange to me that any one should imagine that I can be bound by any rule of law to pay money which I never promised, and which I never authorized *any one in any way or form* to expend or promise on my behalf.

I must be permitted to decline any further correspondence on this subject; and as to leaving the matter in reference, I know nothing that there can be arbitrated upon in such a matter.

I am, Dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

JOHN EASTHOPE.

To John Biggs, Esq., Leicester.

Prohibited from corresponding again on the subject personally, I felt that I might make one further effort in the name of the Committee; and when the year had elapsed, I laid up to both Members the statement with the subjoined letter:—

The South Leicestershire Election Committee have the honour of forwarding to Messrs. Easthope and Ellis the copy of their banking account. The whole of the subscriptions, except that engaged on behalf of Messrs. Easthope and Ellis, and the two following ones, being now paid, the Committee will be glad to close the account as soon as possible, to save interest.

To this communication the following replies were received:—

London, June 22, 1847

Gentlemen,—I have the honour to acknowledge a statement this day received, referring to expenses and subscriptions at your late election contest. I beg leave to repeat what I have before stated to Mr. Biggs, namely, that I never authorized either Mr. Ashurst or any one else to subscribe on my account to those expenses. Mr. Ashurst being appointed my election agent for the Borough of Leicester, could not, without my special authority, be empowered to subscribe money for me to the expenses of the election for the county.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your most obedient servant,

JOHN EASTHOPE.

To the South Leicester  
Election Committee.



30, Cadogan Place,  
22nd June, 1842.

Gentlemen,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of a statement referring to expenses and subscriptions at your late election contest. I beg leave to say that I never authorized either Mr. Ashurst or any other person to subscribe on my account to those expenses. Mr. Ashurst being my election agent for the Borough of Leicester, was not without my special authority empowered to subscribe money for me to the election for the county.

I have the honour to be,

Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

W. ELLIS.

To the Committee of the  
South Leicestershire Election.

Contrast this letter with Mr. Ellis's remarks of last week in your paper. Mr. Ellis there admits the subject to have been matter of discussion between the members and their agent prior to the election, and *that they assented* to subscribe! Yet both Sir J. Easthope and Mr. Ellis in the above letters deny all knowledge of the transaction whatever! What is to be thought of such a course? In the first place expressing astonishment—then denying any knowledge of the affair—then denying they ever authorised the subscription—then refusing to refer the matter to a gentleman of acknowledged and undoubted talent and integrity, of long experience in public business, and personally well known to them—finally prohibiting any further correspondence upon the subject—and then, five years afterwards, to forget all these acts and deeds, and to convict themselves in the *Leicester Chronicle* by shewing that they knew all about it from the first, as I was always sure they did.

The PROOF that Messrs. Easthope and Ellis knew of a county subscription long before the letters were written in which they repudiated all knowledge of it, is afforded by your paper of last week, which contains the following paragraph written by Mr. Wynn Ellis:—

“Prior to the election, however, and in London, Mr. Ashurst (whose connection with Mr. Biggs is well known) said to us, that it was not likely we should have a contest in the Borough; but, to render that more certain, Mr. J. B. proposed to commence operations in the County in order to divert the attention of the Tories; and he asked, if he (Mr. B.) succeeded, and our expenses in the Borough were small, should we object to give a few hundreds towards the expenditure? To this we assented.—But we learn that Mr. Jno. Biggs did not commence in the County until *after* the Borough Election was concluded; and yet he asks for money! That Mr. Biggs recommended that election in the County ignorant of our expenses in the Borough, no one can suppose for a moment.—Our efforts to get accounts of the Borough expenses proved fruitless until the middle of October; and

then (through Mr. Ashurst) a demand was made upon us of £5,500!

“I must again beg you to understand, that the arrangement between us and Mr. Ashurst, to pay a few hundreds, was made conditionally on our money being saved in the Borough, by a diversion in the County, to be commenced so as to divert the attention of the Tories; and yet, in the face of the fact, that the Borough Contest was *over* before Mr. Biggs commenced operations, which circumstance alone would be a sufficient reason for our refusing to pay the sum demanded—and with the knowledge of great expenses having been incurred,—Mr. J. Biggs plunged into a contest for the County (when it was perfectly useless to promote any object in connection with the Borough), and then coolly asked us for £700!—he not having even attempted a diversion in our favour before the Borough Election. The demand is made in a statement of County expenditure thus:—

“ ‘Messrs. Easthope and Ellis (by a promise made through Mr. Ashurst, *ten days BEFORE the Borough Election*), £700.’

“Of course we should not have promised *after* that date, when it was useless for our interest, and on the only ground on which the application was made to us.”

The ADMISSIONS in the above paragraph by Mr. Wynn Ellis are—

1. That a conversation *did occur* in London “*prior to the [Borough] Election*” between Messrs. Easthope and Ellis and Mr. Ashurst relative to the *County Election*.
2. That *they “assented”* to “a few hundreds” being given “towards the expenditure.”
3. That they assented to this for the purpose of their “money being saved in the Borough by a diversion in the County.”

The MISCONCEPTIONS in the statement are, viz.:—

4. That the arrangement to “pay a few hundreds” was made “conditionally on our money being saved in the Borough *by a diversion in the County, to be COMMENCED so as to divert the attention of the Tories.*”
5. “That Mr. J. B. PROPOSED TO COMMENCE operations in the County in order to divert the attention of the Tories.”

The CHARGES in this paragraph are—

6. That “Mr. John Biggs *did not commence* in the County until *after* the Borough Election was concluded,” and yet
7. That Mr. John Biggs “coolly asked us for £700!” he “not having even *attempted* a diversion in our favour before the Borough Election.”



My comments upon these admissions, misconceptions, and charges of Mr. Wynn Ellis shall be as brief as possible.

The ADMISSIONS Nos. 1, 2, and 3, speak for themselves. They admit the fact that *before the Borough Election* an arrangement between the candidates and their confidential agent to support the County struggle by a few hundreds was entered into on account of the prospective advantages it might afford them. With the knowledge of this fact, they write the foregoing letters when the subscription is requested, *expressing surprise—repudiating the claim—refusing a reference and declining further correspondence.*

The MISCONCEPTIONS Nos. 4 and 5 are shown to be such by the narrative of facts contained in the preceding pages.

The CHARGES Nos. 6 and 7 are glaring mis-statements which are refuted by the same narrative of facts.

The unmistakeable aim of these charges and mis-statements is to insinuate that I acted improperly in my official position and to injure me in public opinion. They fall harmless. I have narrated the honest truth, and, I doubt not, shall be done justice to by the public.

The intent to injure me by insinuating that I originated the movement in the County to serve the purposes of the Members for the Borough—that I went out of my way to serve their purposes, and acted improperly in my office by my zeal in their behalf—is a strange charge indeed. My zeal for their interest it would assume to be greater than my regard for my own interest; than my regard for the interest of all my political friends; than my regard for my office and my character. Had this been true instead of false, it would have condemned them the more for not discharging their obligations. There is not an instance on record of such ingratitude for such zeal. The knowledge of the transaction is now admitted by Mr. Ellis, five years after the utter denial, by both himself and Sir John Easthope, of any knowledge of it at all.

As before stated, the engagement was made about the 21st of June; the Borough Election was on the 30th of June; the written acknowledgment of their subscription to the County Fund is dated three days afterwards (on the 3rd of July), after all the Borough proceedings had been known to them. The County polling day, it was known long before, was not till a fortnight after the Borough polling; the contest could not come on till *after* the Borough Election, for the Borough Election was the 29th and 30th of June, and the County contest could not be fought until the day for which the

Sheriff had fixed it, which was on the 1st of July.

The ASSUMPTION that the circumstances of the Borough Election were different to what the Members expected when the subscription was offered, and that that was a reason why they did not remit it, is disproved altogether by the fact, that the letter acknowledging the subscription—and acknowledging it unequivocally—is dated at the Reform Club on the same day as the grant from the Reform Club in fulfilment of the original offer. This date is the 1st of July, three days *after* the Borough Election, three days *after* the Election occurred with all its circumstances, which circumstances were alleged as an excuse for repudiation.

The utility of the County Election to the Borough Members, was of course from the 21st to the 30th of June—from the time the promises which kept it alive and fostered and encouraged it, were made, to their return. If promises had not been made on or about the 21st, the effort, as I have already said, would probably have expired with the two gentlemen declining who were first solicited; and, if made during the next nine or ten days, up to the 30th, the County Tories would have been at liberty to assist the Borough Tories, and to concentrate their energies upon the Town. Had it been otherwise, no one can say what results would have followed. Mr. Ellis says “The circumstances of the Borough Election *being over* before Mr. Biggs commenced operations, would alone be a sufficient reason for our refusing to pay the sum demanded.” If the operations Mr. Ellis means are the bringing up the electors and the polling, how could these take place before the time fixed for them by the Sheriff? If the operations were the preparatory operations, they did take place, were continued daily, and were constantly taking place for above a month before his agent came to arrange for the Borough Election, and from that time to the end of both the Borough and County Elections. Mr. Ellis says “Mr. Biggs plunged into a contest for the County when it was perfectly useless to promote any object in connection with the Borough,” and then coolly asked us for £700.” What does this mean? Does it mean that the County effort was all along to be used gratis by the Borough from the 21st, when they offered supplies which made fighting certain? Did they mean to make it solely subservient to the Borough from the 21st up to the time they were seated by its aid by the fact of its going on? Did they mean that when their promised subscription was required to fight the coming contest, we should then forego the object of all our agitation and arrangement, and allow them to cancel their obligations?



A promise of supplies to the County Fund which, being sufficient to ensure a contest, forced the agitation to be kept up until it was time for that contest to begin—involved no alteration in our course, no change in our policy. The fact of our going on served their interests, for their interests and ours were identical. The expenses of the Borough Election I knew nothing of; the subscription to the County Fund was a distinct affair; the sending down, on the 3rd of July, a written acknowledgment of the subscription by the same mail as the Reform Club's grant, and by which Mr. Gisborne came, shows that *the obligation existed at that time*—shows that *the events and expenses of the Borough Election had nothing to do with it*—shows that the contest, for which it was subscribed, had yet to be fought, and that this fact was as clearly understood by their agent as by myself.

There was no doubt at the time of the subscription that, with funds in hand, candidates would be found. It wanted then three weeks to the South County Nomination, and correspondence from all quarters, both in the county and out of it, was coming in every day. It was in this state of things that the offer was made to us, and it at once cleared up the prospect. The sinews of war, which was all that there was any doubt about, once promised, made it clear sailing, and removed all difficulties. The daily and continued agitation, the new life, the new impulse which was given, induced every possible preparation to be made. The idea that I would have lent myself to the wretched deceit of holding on an election without a fair chance of being able to fight a battle under favourable circumstances, no one who knows me, either Liberal or Tory, will believe. It would have been dishonourable towards all parties.

The conception that my zeal for the interest of coming Borough Candidates, in whose proceedings it was my duty towards the great conflicting parties *not* to interfere;—the idea, I repeat, that my zeal for them should warp my judgment or my integrity and honour, is absurd. Their agent found a county effort was going on which he felt was of immense consequence to the interests of his clients. Like a wise and prudent general he availed himself of it, infused new life into it, at the period when it seemed possible it might fail for want of a subscription, which improved his chances of success and secured his clients from defeat. His subscription was dictated by his clients' interest to serve their purpose; my acceptance of it was induced by what I thought the interests of the county association.

In concluding these observations, I trust that all the Electors who acted with us in 1841 will feel, upon reflection, that every precaution was taken to secure a favourable result for our exertions which cautious and prudent forethought could suggest, and that although "it is not in mortals to command success," we richly and honestly deserved it. I have endeavoured to avoid the introduction of any extraneous matter or bringing the names of gentlemen unnecessarily into this discussion who co-operated in the movement at that period. In doing so, I fear I may have laid myself open to the charge of making myself appear too prominent; but this will, I feel assured, be charitably overlooked in as I hope, it will be the means of saving my political friends from any further annoyance by reviving their recollection of that unfortunate campaign. My having observed comparative silence upon this subject for many years, must convince every one that I have not obtruded the circumstances now explained unnecessarily before the public. The pecuniary losses entailed upon me would never have induced me to have made them publicly known; but the attack upon my honour as a public man in the columns of your last week's paper, has rendered the statement of facts which I have here submitted to you inevitable:—those facts I leave to the good sense and calm consideration of my fellow townsmen with full and implicit confidence that in all questions affecting honesty of purpose and honourable intention, they will be just and impartial in their judgment and decision.

I am, Sir,

Yours obediently,

JOHN BIGGS.

Stonygate, March 11, 1847.

#### NOTES

Copied from the *Leicester Chronicle* of 1841.

Date.

3rd June. The Address of the Registration Association of the South County to the Electors of the Division.

5th June. The Address advertised.

12th June. The Requisition advertised.

(Copy.)

#### COUNTY ELECTION.

To the Registration Association of the Southern Division of the County of Leicester.

Gentlemen,—We, the undersigned Freeholders and other Electors of South Leicestershire, earnestly solicit you to take the sense of the Division at the coming Election; and we hereby engage and pledge ourselves to support two Candidates of Liberal principles of their being introduced by you, with our best energies and exertions.—Signed by

Thomas Paget, Humberstone

Thomas Stokes, Leicester

H. F. Coleman, Evington

J. W. Noble, Danet's Hall

Thos. Burgess, Evington

Geo. Cooper, Glenn

John Nunneley, Market Harborough

and 655 others registered Electors of the Southern Division.

In consequence of the above requisition, I hereby convene a meeting of the South Leicestershire Registration Association, to be held at the Bell Hotel, Leicester, on Tuesday next, the 15th day of June, at 10 o'clock.

JOHN BIGGS, Chairman.

15th June. Public Meeting of Electors convened as above.

16th June. Adjourned Meeting of Electors at the Bell Hotel.

17th June. Parliament dissolved.

18th June. Notice issued for holding Borough Election.

(Copy.)

Election, Borough of Leicester to Wit.

I, JOHN BIGGS, Esq., Mayor of the Borough aforesaid, do hereby give public notice, that in pursuance of a certain precept received by me from the Sheriff of the County of Leicester aforesaid, I shall proceed to the Election of Two Burgesses to serve in Parliament for the said Borough of Leicester, at the Hustings to be erected in the front of the Exchange, in the Market Place of the Borough aforesaid, on Tuesday next, the 29th day of June, inst., at 10 o'clock in the forenoon.

Dated this Twenty-fourth day of June, 1841.

JOHN BIGGS, Mayor.

19th June. Notice issued for holding Election for the Southern Division of the County of Leicester.

(Copy.)

WHEREAS the Sheriff of the County of Leicester has received her Majesty's Writ for the Electing for the said County, Four Knights, that is to say two Knights for each Division of the said County, to serve in a certain Parliament to be holden at her Majesty's City of Westminster, on the 19th day of August next ensuing. Now the said Sheriff doth hereby make proclamation and give notice to all whom it may concern, that he intends to proceed to the Election of Two Knights for the Southern Division of the said County at his special County Court to be held at the Castle at Leicester, in the said County, on Saturday, the 10th day of July next, at 10 o'clock in the forenoon of the same day.

RICHARD MITCHELL, Esq.,  
Sheriff.

Sheriff's Office, Leicester,  
24th June, 1841.

26th June. The above notices appeared in the *Chronicle* of this date.

30th June. Addresses of Borough Members thanking the Electors for their return.

5th July. *Monday*. Addresses of Cheney and Gisborne issued, advertised in the next *Chronicle*.

10th July. Nomination South County.

13th July. South County Election.

17th July. Nomination and Election; with Report of, and Leading Article upon both in *Chronicle* of this date.



# THE BOROUGH ELECTION

FOR 1841,

FROM THE LEICESTERSHIRE MERCURY OF MARCH 13, 1847.

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And over as many old papers he turned  
As Hume ever "moved," or Omar burned."

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We were and are still astonished at the temerity of the *Leicester Chronicle* last week, in perilling the gains of its reputation for prudence and sagacity by publishing such crude and self-contradictory statements as it then did, on the authority of Mr. John Ellis, respecting the Borough Election of 1841. Without being over-critical as to the correctness of our contemporary's sentences—without being tempted even by its polite reference to our "judicious prohibition" of editorial personalities, to say to the personalities it then unquestionably indulged in—we shall proceed, for the enlightenment of our readers, to give them, as briefly as possible, a correct version of the circumstances of that election, and thus enable them to test the other version and ascertain its proper weight and value. We shall do this on the unimpeachable testimony of the three gentlemen (Messrs. How, Moore, and Benson) who were the managers of that election on behalf of the Reform Society, and who have not only furnished us with the necessary facts and figures, but have also given us full permission to avail ourselves of them in any way we deem best. A month ago the *Chronicle* was loud in its praises of Sir John Easthope. But soon it changed its course, and not only dropped Sir John altogether, but even left it to be inferred, from its silence and insinuations for his colleague's conduct, that the Baronet was the sinner *par excellence*. It also puts on record a plea of amiable weakness, or "motives of delicacy," to deprecate the verdict sure to be given against their remaining client, whilst the jury (electors) are at the same time recommended by the *Chronicle* to convict the Baronet *teste socio*! Sir John, indeed, exhibited no such amiable weakness, "such motives of delicacy," for many years past; and even his former advocate the *Chronicle*, apparently feeling for the poor unfortunate debtor-creditors, seems ready to exclaim with them, in the bluntly eloquent words of Dame Quickly, "You owe us money, Sir John; and now you pick a quarrel to beguile us of it."

The *Chronicle*, in commencing with Mr. Wynne Ellis' correspondence, says, "We shall extract certain portions to show that his course has been throughout honourable and upright." These extracts are therefore public property; and we hope we shall not be considered censorious, or to be giving a "Parthian kick to the Benthamite," if we say that our conclusions, after perusing this correspondence, differ materially from those of our contemporary, whose very selection of "extracts" indicates a singularity of opinion as to the best way of proving one's case that can only be accounted for on the supposition that it is afflicted with a moral obliquity of vision for which the operation of *strabismus* cannot too soon be performed.

The burden of the defence set up by Mr. Wynne Ellis and the *Chronicle*, to account for the delay in the payment of their election liabilities, is that the Members were "astounded" at their amounting to £5,500. Mr. Ellis quotes a letter from the managers of the Reform Society to the effect that they, having had the management and expenditure of the Borough election, and having heard that a sum of between £5000 and £6000 had been demanded, thought it right to declare that the total expenditure was no more than £3,700. This letter is inserted without any explanation of the circumstances under which it was written, and as if it had voluntarily emanated from the parties by whom it was signed; thus being likely to lead the uninitiated reader to believe that it alluded to the *whole* expenses of the election, and not, as was the fact, to the expenditure of one department, that of the Reform Society alone. Now the words in the copy of the original communication which we have seen are, "We who have had the *principal* management of that election;" and had Mr. Ellis given the word "principal," as he ought to have done, it would have shown that, though theirs was the principal, it was not the only department of expenditure. Mr. Ellis's statement in fact, admits that the solicitors' and private bills amounted to £400, and that the expenditure of the Candidates



ection or "Legal Committee" (as distinguished from the Reform Society) for strictly legal and all accidental expenditure amounted to £546; though Mr. Ellis uses an italicised "*doubt*" as to whether this was included in the gross estimate of £5,500. There is, in truth, no doubt upon the matter, as the following statement will show:—

Reform Society's account ..	£3,727	14	4
Solicitors' and private bills..	400	0	0
Candidates' or "Legal Committee".....	546	2	8
South County subscription, £1,000, less the legal expenses, which supposing them the usual average, £300, would yield .....	700	0	0
	£5,373	17	0

No doubt there would be sundries still to be accounted for; so that the original gross estimate of £5,500 does not, taking all the circumstances into consideration, seem so very astounding.

Let us now proceed to see how these matters have been arranged; and we may well ask why have they been concealed? They are all matters of public notoriety. After vainly endeavouring, during many months, to obtain a settlement, the managers were peremptorily given to understand that NOTHING would be paid to them (the advance of £650 had been sent before) until they had signed the document dated Feb. 24th, 1842, as a final release; and that when it was so signed, a sum should be sent, which, with £546 to the Legal Committee, and 650 for the advance, should make in the whole £3,000, exclusive of the solicitors' and private bills. Farther delay appearing useless (it was now eight months after the election) and the creditors being anxious and necessitous (15 of them are since dead); a general meeting of the Reform Society was called, which was held on the 24th of February, 1842. At that meeting Messrs. How and Billson made their report as to their interview and correspondence respecting the claims of the society, and stated their utter hopelessness of getting any money unless the condition exacted was complied with. Under these circumstances the committee decided that it was expedient to obtain what they could, and divide it up amongst the creditors—taking from each creditor a receipt of a similar kind to protect themselves. Yet this *extorted* receipt, given rather than get nothing, is put in as evidence of the complete payment of debts!

That this was not the case is now proved by the fact of Mr. Wynn Ellis having last week sent a check to pay his half of these unpaid although receipted claims.

The next paragraph, and the next but two after that, apply so exclusively to the South County Subscription and are so clearly refuted in the letter from Mr. John Biggs we have the pleasure of this day publishing, that comment from us is unnecessary.

We are next told about the elections of 1831-32 and 1834, which Mr. Ellis contrasts with the last election, both as to the expense and the proportion borne by each of the candidates. But he must surely have forgotten the nine years which have elapsed since the cheap election of 1832—in which interim the expensive elections of 1837 and 1839 occurred: or why does he thus jump back from the Omega to the Alpha of his political career, without showing the proportion borne of the expenses in 1839 in contrast with those of 1832? As well might we contrast the nominal expense of Mr. Dawson's unopposed return for the County in 1832 with the heavy expense attending the defeat of Messrs. Gisborne and Cheney in 1841 by more than a thousand votes. Nothing is proved in either case but that circumstances were infinitely more adverse to the Liberal party in 1841 than they were in 1832.

The reference to the "hour's display in the Market place" is also inconsequential and inconsistent. Everybody who has had to do with the practical details of electioneering, knows that an "hour's display" may induce decisive action; and that the precautions taken and instructions issued under the expectation of a contest, if carried out with energy and zeal, cannot be countermanded just when the "hour's display" has proved that expectation groundless. Mr. Wynn Ellis and Sir John Easthope should censure the Tories for this expensive "hour's display," and not the managers of the Reform Society, who incurred inevitable expenses on the faith of the instructions given, who had no personal interest to serve, and but for whose self-sacrificing and patriotic exertions on behalf of the Members who now cast unjust imputations upon their integrity, that "hour's display" would very probably have resulted in those Members having had to leave the town as defeated instead of triumphant candidates.

With this observation we feel we may safely leave the decision, upon the two sides of this question, in the hands of our readers.